

# Cultural Differences in Chinese and American Family Education: Situational Narratives in *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain*

## 中美家庭教育文化差异——《追求幸福》与《成长的烦恼》中的情境叙事

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**Abstract**— The family is the first socialized unit that a person comes into contact with after birth, and the educational activities of the family begin at birth and end at death. The cultivation of a person's character and the formation of values are closely related to the moral education he receives from the family. There are many differences between China and the United States in terms of cultural traditions, conceptual awareness, lifestyles, and social customs. The reason for analyzing the difference in family education between the two countries is that we correctly borrow the premise of the advanced education concept of the United States. Finding the best combination among these differences and learning from the reasonable family education methods in the United States will help improve China's family education.

This article selects two works for comparison, one is the inspirational movie *The Pursuit of Happiness* that swept around the United States at the end of this century and the beginning of the last century, and a well-known TV series *Growing Pain* in China. These two works were chosen because they are very famous in both countries and the family education concepts in them highlight the family education styles of the United States and China respectively, which are very representative.

This paper adopts the comparative analysis and the literature research method to compare the commonalities and differences of family education in China and the United States. Through the comparison of situational narrative (comparison of narrative sections, comparison of narrative techniques and comparison of narrative rhetoric) and comparison of family education models (comparison of ideas, parent-child activities

and difficulty solving) of the two works, the advanced experience of American family education is summarized, such as paying attention to children's independence, paying attention to cultivating a sense of equality, respecting children and so on. Its essence is refined and absorbed, which has good reference significance for the improvement of Chinese family education.

**Keywords—** family education, cultural differences, situational narratives, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, *Growing Pain*

**摘要—** 家庭是一个人在出生以后接触的第一个社会化单位, 家庭的教育活动始于出生, 终于死亡。一个人品格的养成、价值观的形成与其受到的家庭道德教育密切相关。中美两国由于在文化传统, 观念意识, 生活方式以及社会习俗等方面存在着许多差异。分析两国家庭教育的差异的原因是我们正确借鉴美国的先进育人理念的前提。在这些差异中找到最佳的结合点借鉴美国合理的家庭教育方式有助于中国的家庭教育趋于完善。

本文选择了两部作品进行对比, 一个是本世纪末上世纪初风靡美国励志的电影《当幸福来敲门》和一部中国家喻户晓的电视剧《少年派》, 选择这两部剧是因为它们在两个国家都非常著名以及其中的家庭教育理念分别凸显了美国和中国的家庭教育风格, 极具代表性。

本文采用比较分析和文献研究法这两种方法, 比较中美家庭教育的共性和差异性。通过两部作品的情景叙事比较(叙事情节的比较、叙事手法的比较和叙事修辞的比较)以及家庭教育模式的比较(理念比较、亲子活动和困难解决), 美国家庭教育的先进经验, 如注重孩子的独立性, 注重培养平等意识, 尊重儿童等等, 提炼并汲取其精粹, 对中国家庭教育的完善具有很好的借鉴意义。

**关键词:** 中美家庭教育; 文化差异; 情景叙事; 《当幸福来敲门》; 《少年派》

## I. INTRODUCTION

Family is a product of human society in the process of development. It is the most basic and core social component cell, and the first social environment for human survival and activities after birth. In different historical periods, the meaning of the family may not be consistent, but the important position of the family in the course of social progress has never been shaken. The stable development of the society is closely related to the actual situation of the family. The labor force in the family is creating the wealth of today's society, and the builders of tomorrow's society are the new generation of the family. Family education plays a very important role in the growth and training of the new generation. Family education is the starting point of one's educational journey and the foundation stone of receiving school education, social education and inheritance education in the future.

In the past ten years, Chinese and foreign researchers

have studied a lot of Chinese and American family cultural differences in *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain*, roughly from the aspects of thinking and culture, education and culture, family perspective, social interpersonal differences, personal value differences, emotional cognition differences, especially in the past five years, the differences in Chinese and foreign family education have received more and more attention, but there is little research on situational narratives.

There are many differences between China and the United States in terms of cultural traditions, conceptual awareness, lifestyles, and social customs. The reason for analyzing the difference in family education between the two countries to learn from successful experience of American family education which helps to improve Chinese family education as a whole and eventually promote China's international competitiveness in the future.

This paper analyzes the characteristics of the education

systems and the current situation of family education in China and the United States through the two works *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain*, comparing the similarities and differences of family education in China and the United States. This paper finds the shortcomings in the process of family education in China, breaks through the barriers in the concept of Chinese family moral education, and draws on the essence of the American education system, hoping to provide practical suggestions for the improvement of China's family education system. This paper is of practical significance for promoting the development of China's family education and promoting the process of China's education reform.

This paper mainly includes the following research content: the first part, introduction. According to the background and purpose of the question, this paper introduces the significance and value of the comparative study of Chinese and American educational culture, and elaborates the research situation of family moral education at home and abroad. The second part, literature review. It is a review of the study of family education models in two works. The third part, the two works of the scene narrative comparison. They are the comparison of narrative plot, narrative technique and narrative rhetoric. The fourth part is the comparison of family education modes in the two works. They are concept comparison, parent-child activities and conflict resolution. The fifth part is the conclusion.

By studying the differences between family education in China and the United States, this paper compares the similarities and differences, makes an in-depth analysis of situational narrative methods and means, and explores effective family education models, so as to provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for the development of family education in China and the West.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, there have been many studies on Chinese and Western family education, but little research has been done on situational narratives. Due to the

differences in social systems and cultural backgrounds between China and the United States, parents of the two countries also present different cultural differences and characteristics in their children's educational concepts. Regarding the discussion of Chinese and foreign family education, domestic and foreign researchers have given many views.

### Review on Cultural Differences in Chinese and American Family Education

Most abroad researches on the cultural differences between China and the United States mainly focus on family education and social integration. In recent years, some foreign educators have put forward several critical opinions on family education from the four aspects of improving family education (Maluleke S G, 2014)<sup>[1]</sup>, the impact of the effectiveness of family education on policies (Blok H, Karsten S, 2011)<sup>[2]</sup>, and the shaping of family education (Purcell V, 2017)<sup>[3]</sup> and educational experience (Beck C W, 2015)<sup>[4]</sup>, and discussed them from the perspective of family education and social integration. Explore and predict the future trend of home education. (Chris Lubienski, 2013)<sup>[5]</sup>. At the same time, in cross-cultural communication, different values, different national personalities, and different ways of thinking lead to cultural differences between China and the West.

Most domestic researches on the cultural differences between China and the United States mainly focus on family culture and values. Zhang Yangmei (2011)<sup>[6]</sup>, Zhou Ling, Li Junjun (2009)<sup>[7]</sup>, Yang Chao (2014)<sup>[8]</sup> and Wang Jianfen (2014)<sup>[9]</sup> pointed out that the focus of American family education is to cultivate children's ability to adapt to various environments and independent survival, attach great importance to children's self-training, and pay attention to cultivating children's independent consciousness and independent living ability from an early age. Such as labor exercise, will exercise, etc. However, Zhang Dingdan (2014)<sup>[10]</sup>, Lin Xin (2018)<sup>[11]</sup> and Zhang Na (2012)<sup>[12]</sup> pointed out Chinese has long been influenced by the ideas of "propriety" and "loyalty" advocated by Confucian culture,

and whether it is the concept of interpersonal communication or education, it has always adhered to the harmony and self-dedication advocated by Confucianism. Zhu Juanjuan (2018)<sup>[13]</sup> and Guo Shixian (2020)<sup>[14]</sup> points out that the core of American culture is individualistic values, and the protagonist Chris in *The Pursuit of Happiness* on the Door implements this core value in his understanding of despair and hope, freedom and happiness. Shi Yujie (2019)<sup>[15]</sup>, Zou Meng (2015)<sup>[16]</sup> and Jiang Nannan (2013)<sup>[17]</sup> pointed out that unlike the United States, China attaches more importance to collectivity in terms of individual values, which is a direct difference between American culture and Chinese culture. Shao Xueyan (2019)<sup>[18]</sup>, Zhou Haixin (2013)<sup>[19]</sup> and Bao Wenjuan (2011)<sup>[20]</sup> pointed out that competition between countries is ultimately reflected in the competition for talent. Moreover, the United States is a country full of opportunities and challenges, advocating independence and exploration, and cultivating talents with the ability to handle a variety of situations is the goal of American family education. And in China, Min Zhengwei, Li Haofeng (2008)<sup>[21]</sup>, Li Lingtao, Qi Binyu (2019)<sup>[22]</sup>, Xu Lei, Zeng Yuheng (2019)<sup>[23]</sup> and Zhang Yongfeng (2022)<sup>[24]</sup> take the TV series *Growing Pain* as an example, we can see from it that China's family education has become an extension of school education, paying attention to reading, focusing on intellectual development and investment, and neglecting the cultivation and exercise of life ability. The center of this play always revolves around the word "college entrance examination", and all the families in the play focus on the college entrance examination wholeheartedly. "Everything is inferior, only reading is high." "Learn and excel." and other old society feudal imperial examination system and its ideology are deeply rooted in the hearts of the people.

All in all, most domestic research on this work explores the fundamental differences in family education between China and the United States from the aspects of family culture and values, but rarely studies the dynamic expression and cultural connotation of Chinese and

American family cultural differences from the perspective of film narrative techniques.

To sum up, in the past ten years, Chinese and foreign researchers have studied a lot of family cultural differences between China and the United States, roughly from the aspects of thinking and cultural differences, educational cultural differences, family perspective differences, social interpersonal differences, personal value differences, emotional cognitive differences, especially in the past five years, the differences in Chinese and foreign family education have received more and more attention, but there is little research on situational narrative.

### III. COMPARISON OF THE SITUATIONAL NARRATIVES OF THE TWO WORKS

*The Pursuit of Happiness* was written by Gabriel. Directed by Muccino, Will Smith. American films starring Smith and others. The film is based on a true story, and the protagonist is Chris Gardner, a black American investment expert. The film tells the inspirational story of a down-and-out salesman who is on the verge of bankruptcy and his wife has left home, how he worked hard to fulfill his responsibilities as a single parent, worked hard to become a stock market trader, and finally became a well-known financial investor. *Growing Pain* is an urban family TV series directed by Liu Huining and Li Shaofei, starring Zhang Jiayi, Yan Ni, Zhao Jinmai, Guo Junchen, Wang Yuwen and Jiang Guannan. The play mainly revolves around four families, telling the story of family members facing the sun, wind and rain, working hard, and finally harvesting growth.

#### 3.1 Comparison of Narrative Plots

In terms of narrative device *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain* have similarities and differences, they both have unique narratives of traditional themes, that is to say, they both face difficulties, overcome difficulties, and finally reap growth. But they focus on different characters, the former focusing on the characters of one family, the latter focusing on the characters of four families.

### 3.1.1 Similarity: Situational Narrative of Inspirational Theme

*The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain* have one outstanding thing in common: they both tell the story of one or more families who grow up and achieve success through many difficulties.

In *The Pursuit of Happiness*, Chris. Gardner (Will. Smith), a young black man living in San Francisco, worked as a salesman to raise his wife and young son. Chris never felt that life was very happy, and of course it was not very painful, just like thousands of ordinary people in the United States. Men live ordinary lives, until one day, a series of sudden changes let Chris know how precious ordinary days are. First, he lost his job, and the company layoffs cost him his job. Chris has suffered a series of major blows since then, his wife runs away because she can't bear the long-term poverty life, and even his six-year-old son (Jayden. Smith) also took it with him. Not long after, his wife returned her son to Chris, and since then Chris has not only had to face the dilemma of unemployment, but also has to raise his son independently. Not long after, Chris was evicted from the house by the landlord because of his long-term rent arrears and lived on the streets with his son. Over the next two or three years, the residence of the father and son moved from cardboard boxes to public restrooms. Chris is strong in the face of difficult times to work casual jobs to make money, but also strives to cultivate children's spirit of optimism in the face of difficulties, although the father and son have a hard time, but they can still live happily. Once, Chris met a man driving a high-end sports car in the parking lot, Chris asked him what kind of job he had to live such a life, the man told him that he was a stockbroker, and Chris decided that he wanted to be a good stockbroker and live a good life with his son. Chris, who had no knowledge of stocks at all, worked as an apprentice in a Wall Street stock company with perseverance, and he quickly mastered the knowledge of the stock market, then opened his own stockbroking company, and finally became a millionaire. Chris experienced many setbacks along the way, but his young

son gave him the greatest encouragement every time, and the two fathers and sons supported each other and finally fulfilled another American dream.

In *Growing Pain*, the agile girl Lin Miaomiao performed exceptionally in the middle school entrance examination and was accidentally admitted to a key high school, and her mother Wang Shengnan raised her eyebrows. Living in high school, Lin Miaomiao, who broke free from his mother's control, made three friends, Deng Xiaoqi, Qian Sanyi and Jiang Tianhao, and also became the anchor of the campus radio station, like a "winner in life". In the face of a frontal crit from Pei Yin, who "my son scored first in the city", Wang Shengnan's fighting spirit was fully ignited and began to accompany him. The road is narrow, and he has become neighbors with Pei Yin's family. The conflict between Wang and Pei continued to escalate, but they cherished each other because of marriage problems and became best friends. With the arrival of the third year of high school, Lin Miaomiao experienced the shock of his parents' feelings, Qian Sanyi endured the appearance of his parents, Jiang Tianhao was suddenly bankrupt by the family, and Deng Xiaoqi fell to the bottom because her mother's secret was exposed. The teenagers are untamed, facing the sun, wind and rain, and growing like spring grass. After the college entrance examination, the teenagers went their separate ways, full of sadness and expectations for the future. The four families have gone through twists and turns, found their own direction, and harvested moving growth.

### 3.1.2 Difference: Different Focus on Characters

*The Pursuit of Happiness* tells a touching story between father and son, and a microcosm of greatness and diligence in the face of adversity, focusing on only two characters, father and son. Moreover, the most focused person in the film is the father Chris, Chris's success is not only due to his diligence and broad-mindedness, but more importantly, he can recognize the essence of the whole event, not make decisions easily, even if the road ahead is difficult, he will face it calmly. The main reasons for Chris's success can be summarized in the following two aspects: First,



clarify your life goals. Second, be good at seizing the opportunities around you. The film embodies a clear spirit of independence, and the father teaches his son that everyone should achieve happiness through their own efforts. Americans are more often successful through self-dependence, both for loved ones and friends.

But *Growing Pain* focuses on the story of four families, and the characters in the drama are not adults but four high school students, Lin Miaomiao, Qian Sanyi, Deng Xiaoqi and Jiang Tianhao. The four teenagers in *Growing Pain* are all post-00s, they grew up in the environment of the information age, their material life has been satisfied, and their spiritual life is greatly enriched than before, and they have the courage to put forward and insist on their own views. In the *Growing Pain*, Lin Dawei, played by Zhang Jiayi, adheres to the concept of enlightened parenting and advocates that the education of his daughter should be based on understanding and supplemented by guidance. And Wang Shengnan, played by Yan Ni, is a typical Chinese "tiger mother", with the famous saying "Mom's hobby is you." Focus your life entirely on your family and your children. The differences and run-ins between the two concepts truly reflect the differences and changes in contemporary family education concepts.

### 3.2 Comparison of Narrative Devices

In terms of narrative devices, *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain* both tell the narrative tightly and coherently, trapping the audience in the emotions presented in the work, and then resonating with the audience. However, their narrative devices are also different, *The Pursuit of Happiness* mainly uses first-person and narratage, while *Growing Pain* not only uses first-person narration but also second-person and third-person narration, but doesn't use narratage.

#### 3.2.1 Similarity: Compact and Coherent Narrative

*The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain* are very compact and coherent, one link after another. They adopt the structure of "circular narrative" and "dramatic linearity", so that the audience is trapped in the emotions presented by

the work in the intricate plot and rhythm, causing resonance. After watching these two works, most of the audience will feel that the plot of these works are compact, and even think these two works are very good. This is because *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain* both adopt a circular structure, narrative, and dramatic linear structure, making the plot of the film more compact and easier to mobilize the audience's emotions.

First, both works adopt the circular narrative structure, it presents the fate of the characters in the work more clearly, and it is easier to trigger the audience's tears. In my opinion, the work adopts a "ring" narrative structure, which presents the context of this story more clearly, and also highlights the more complete story of the characters in the work, and also conveys the excitement of the dreamer after realizing his dream. Let the audience's senses be mobilized with the work, touching the softness of the audience's heart.

Second, both works adopt the dramatic linear narrative structure, taking the causal relationship of the story as the narrative driving force. The story is dramatized with linear time, so that the plot structure is interlocking and the logic is tightly logical and complete, strengthening the "illusionary reality" and "empathy", confusing the audience into the play. The dramatic linear narrative structure allows the entire film to present the causes and consequences of the entire event in the truncation, advancement and jump. There are not too many redundant pictures, and between the cross-transitions of the lenses, it creates more suspense and conflict for the work. Under the seamless connection of the lens, the audience is trapped in the emotions of the starring performance, which resonates with emotions.

#### 3.2.2 Difference: Different Perspectives of Narration

*The Pursuit of Happiness* is mainly narrated in the first person and narratage, while *Growing Pain* is narrated not only in the first person but also in the second and third person, but without narratage. *The Pursuit of Happiness* cleverly uses the protagonist's first-person narration to increase the authenticity and coherence of the narrative; Through the metaphor of symbols, the rich emotions in the

hearts of the characters are brought out, which makes the development of the plot more substitutionary; In terms of theme sublimation, a lot of close-ups and contrasting shots are used to highlight the depth and dimension of the film's ideas. At the beginning of the film, after Garner sent his son to the nursery, he looked at the child's small figure through the window, and the first narration slowly opened with the loving eyes of the father staring at his son, "I am Chris Garner, I didn't see my father until I was 28 years old, so I made a commitment when I was very young, and when I grow up, I will always be by my children's side after I become a father." I don't know if you have noticed that Garner uses 7 "I" in this short sentence. This way of expression is simple and direct and down-to-earth, just like we usually stand downstairs with our neighbors and chat, telling each other who I am, how old I am, my simple life experience, and what kind of person I am. It only took a few seconds to get closer to the audience, since Garner emphasized that "I will always be by my children's side." Then it also indicates that in the advancement of the plot of the movie, there will be a lot of interaction between him and his son, and this is the highlight of this film. When using the art form of film to tell a real event, the most important point is not to be detached from reality, not to make the audience feel the slightest distortion, otherwise the film is a failure. The success of *The Pursuit of Happiness* is because the director uses first-person narration, which greatly increases the realism and substitution of the film.

### 3.3 Comparison of Narrative Rhetorical Device

In terms of narrative device, *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain* both violate the principle of cooperation and follow the principle of politeness, so that the audience can deepen their understanding of the film and thus correctly apply these principles in real life. However, they use rhetorical devices with different emphases, the former highlighting the rhetorical devices of repetition and contrast, and the latter highlighting the rhetorical devices of white drawing.

#### 3.3.1 Similarity: Violation of the Principle of

### Cooperation and Following the Principle of Courtesy

*The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain* both cleverly violate the principle of cooperation and follow the principle of politeness in narrative device. So that readers can have a deeper understanding of the storyline, character and inner emotions of the characters in the work, deepen their understanding of the work, and learn the important role of language in conversational expression.

American Chinese philosopher Grice(1975)<sup>[25]</sup> proposed that "in language communication activities, there is a tacit understanding between the speaker and the listener that both parties will abide by certain principles." Grice calls this mutually adherent principle the cooperative principle of conversation. To further illustrate the principles of cooperation, Grice has broken down the principles of cooperation into 4 guidelines. First, Quantitative guidelines require what is said is exactly what is needed for the conversation and saying no more than the information needed. Second, Quality Guidelines are being truthful in what you say, they do not say that self-knowledge is false and do not say anything that lacks sufficient evidence. Third, correlation guidelines are being related. Fourth, method guidelines are being clear, which require avoiding obscurity and ambiguity, there is conciseness and being orderly.

The first three of these four guidelines deal with the question of "what to say" in communication, and the fourth deals with the question of "how to say". In fact, it requires people to pay attention to the information, authenticity, relevance and clarity of the conversation in communication. By adhering to all these guidelines, people will be able to communicate in the most direct way and with the greatest efficiency. However, in actual conversation, due to the special needs, language habits, relationships and other reasons of both parties, the speaker will also violate the principle of cooperation and express his true thoughts in an implicit and indirect way to achieve specific communication purposes.

In response to the phenomenon of violating the principle of cooperation in communication, Leech proposed

the principle of politeness based on Brown & Levinson's face theory, pointing out that people deliberately violate the principle of cooperation in interpersonal communication, and let the listener care about the true intention of the speaker is out of the consideration of verbal politeness. In life, there are many examples of misunderstandings, conflicts, and interpersonal tensions caused by inappropriate speech, which is enough to show the importance of politeness in the use of words. The principle of courtesy is based on the "benefit and loss theory", which can be subdivided into 6 guidelines and 12 sub-criteria. First, strategic guidelines require trying to make others as little damage as possible and trying to benefit others as much as possible. Second, generosity guidelines require trying to benefit yourself as little as possible and making yourself suffer a lot. Third, praise guidelines require trying to minimize the derogatory treatment of others and trying to exaggerate the praise of others. Fourth, modesty guidelines require praising yourself as little as possible and demeaning yourself as much as possible. Fifth, agree with the guidelines require trying to narrow the differences between yourself and others and trying to exaggerate the consistency between yourself and others. Sixth, compassion guidelines require trying to minimize your dislike of others and trying to exaggerate your sympathy for others.

Take the example from *The Pursuit of Happiness*: Violation of quantitative guidelines and use strategy guidelines to remedy them. Because the internship period is not paid, the protagonist Chris is no longer able to support him and his son in the later stages of the internship. In desperation, Chris earned \$24 selling blood, and he paid \$8 for a core sensor to repair a portable bone density scanner, and his son wanted to see the sensor on the bus back to the relief station. So there is the following dialogue:

Christopher: What is it?

Chris: This is for fixing sensors.

Christopher: Can I take a look?

Chris: Of course, just don't break it, unless you want to sleep in the same room with me for the rest of your life.

Christopher: I don't mind.

Chris: No, you'll mind.

During the conversation, when his son Christopher asked him if he could see the core sensor, Chris's response was "Of course, just don't break it, unless you want to sleep in a room with me for the rest of your life." This answer violates the quantitative rule: your words cannot be more detailed than required. The protagonist first agrees to show his son the light bulb and core sensor, but asks him not to break it, which will hurt his son's emotions, so he humorously adds that unless the son is willing to live in a room with him for the rest of his life, through the strategic guideline: try to make others as little damage as possible, to alleviate the negative impact on his son's face. This dialogue also reflects from the side that Chris remains optimistic, humorous, tries his best to protect his son with a small heart, and is a good father with responsibilities even in a poor environment.

In *Growing Pain*, Lin Dawei's job is a funeral parlour host, and after his daughter finding out it, she hated this profession, felt very humiliated, and even quarreled with her father. But in the end, Lin Miaomiao was still persuaded by Lin Dawei with actions, a stray cat that Lin Miaomiao often fed died, it was Lin Dawei who took Lin Miaomiao to hold a funeral for it, and also said a lot of words of relief to Lin Miaomiao, until this time Lin Miaomiao understood that his father's work was not so terrible, but great, because he was able to let the dead leave without regrets, so that the living could be relieved, which is the meaning of this job. This section uses strategic guidelines to mitigate the negative impact on the daughter's face.

### 3.3.2 Difference: Different Focus on Rhetoric Devices

*The Pursuit of Happiness* highlights the rhetorical device of repetition and comparison. For example, Chris called his wife when he was detained, "All right, just... All right take him to the park... and bring him back, all right? All right, just bring me my son back. Okay, Linda?" There are four "All right" here, the first two and the last one is Chris's



comfort to himself, and the third is a kind of begging. The repetition of the phrase "bring back" further revealed Chris's inner fear.

And the rhetorical device of comparison in the film are everywhere, often full of expectation one second, and fall to the bottom of reality the next. The first such contrasting camera switch is the narration after Garner stands in front of the building and chats with the owner of the luxury car, "I still remember that moment, they all looked super happy, why can't I also have a happy face?" "Almost a second later, the camera switched directly to the alarm clock at 5:25 a.m., which is the distance between reality and dreams. Since then, Garner has firmly established her goal of becoming a stockbroker, and at the same time began a slow long road to fight against reality, such a comparison lens conversion processing, more able to mobilize the audience's emotions, follow the protagonist happy and sad together. A large number of applications to non-camera, including watching rugby matches, insinuations about the gap between rich and poor, etc., are also an interpretation and sublimation of the theme of "inspiration" in the movie, and they are trying to become a happy person.

*Growing Pain* highlights the rhetorical device of white drawing. The TV series *Growing Pain* vividly shows the living conditions of high school students and their parents in white. First, from the perspective of parents, parents pay more attention to their children's academic studies and almost everything. In this TV series, four classmates have become family representatives in the city today, urban office workers represented by Lin Miaomiao's parents, high level intellectual families represented by well-educated Qian Sanyi and his mother (his father isn't in this family), wealthy businessman families represented by Jiang Tianhao's parents, and single-parent families represented by Deng Xiaoli's mother. Through these families, we can see the survival of urban teenagers, no matter what work their parents do, without exception, they all focus on the children who have already entered high school. And this just happens to make many viewers involuntarily compare these four

families with their own families, and they can always find their own shadows, so there will be emotional resonance. Second, from the perspective of family education, adolescence is a thorny issue. To say that in this TV series, there is nothing more tossed than the adolescent girl Lin Miaomiao, and her mother belongs to the overriding parent representative of the typical college entrance examination, although she is a teacher at school, but she does not understand family education. When facing her daughter at home, the image of a "crazy" housewife is typical, if it were not for Lin Miaomiao's father being able to wisely resolve the turmoil, I am afraid that Lin Miaomiao was really ruined by her mother. Looking at Qian Sanyi's family, in his emotional world, he still has his own emotional needs, but fortunately, his mother did not go too far with her son.

Through the device of white drawing, different family cultures have been picturesquely reproduced in the audiences' minds. Many parents can find their own shadow, and many students can also find their own shadow, so they can have emotional resonance.

#### IV. COMPARISON OF FAMILY EDUCATION MODELS IN THE TWO WORKS

##### 4.1 Comparison of Concept

From the concept of the two works, the adults in each work are leading their next generation to pursue happiness and success, to have dreams, and to defend dreams, only in this way will we succeed and happiness will come. But the values of happiness and success in China and the United States are different. China focusing on collectivism while the United States focusing on individualism.

##### 4.1.1 Similarity: Leading the Next Generation in the Pursuit of Happiness and Success

The film *The Pursuit of Happiness* and the TV series *Growing Pain* have a distinctive common denominator in their educational philosophy, which is to lead the next generation to pursue happiness and success. *The Pursuit of Happiness* shows the protagonist Chris Gardner's tenacious struggle with the reality of life and his strong desire and

persistent pursuit of a happy life. There is a classic sentence in the film: "If you have a dream, you have to defend it." Faced with a life full of holes, Chris always believes that after working hard, happiness will come knocking. No matter how hard life is, you have to keep faith. Chris while bringing up the children, while going around to sell medical instruments, this time their life is very hard, not enough to eat, and even no place to live. Every day they had to wait in a long line to live in the free relief house, and if they couldn't get in line, they had to live in the public toilet. But Chris never gave up hope for life, and after hard work, he finally became a stockbroker and lived a happy life with his children.

With the theme of college entrance exams, *Growing Pain* shows the struggle of four families in their three years of high school, overcoming the difficult entrance exams and finally getting into the ideal college, and ultimately reaping the rewards of growth. Although there are quarrels and anger in the process, the children and their parents eventually reap the benefits of growth and love. By depicting the campus life of four high school students and their busy time preparing for the college entrance exams, *Growing Pain* shows the small worries and blessings of adolescence, and also reflects the different responses and dilemmas of different families in today's society when facing the pressure of children's education and higher education. After all, those who have gone through the college entrance exams or accompanied their children through the exams will remember this experience vividly. With both topicality and authenticity, it can be said that the TV series *Growing Pain* comes with the attribute of "topic maker".

#### 4.1.2 Difference: Different Values in the Pursuit of Happiness and Success

We can see from the two works that there is a big difference between American values and Chinese values.

*The Pursuit of Happiness* reflects the contemporary American view of family education and the way of education. Chris attaches importance to the cultivation of

his son's character and values, and he passes on his sense of responsibility, independence, optimism and perseverance in his dreams to his son, guiding him to establish his own independent values. Individualism is the core of American cultural values, representing individuality and uniqueness, which is equivalent to "individualism" in China. It is a philosophy of life that takes the individual as the primary focus, confirms that the human being is the subject of value, firmly believes that each person has the value of each person, and attaches great importance to the self-rule, control and development of the individual, which to a large extent promotes the realization of the American dream. The belief in and admiration for individual struggle, the pursuit of equality and freedom, and the reliance on one's own strength in the process of realizing self-worth is a character trait that Americans have long formed and always maintained, and the full respect and importance given to the value of success while relying on one's own struggle and individual ability is the strong pillar on which American personal independence has thrived for a long time. The film reinforces and promotes the myth that America can succeed only through fair play, convincing viewers that success will not always elude you if you work hard and do your best.

Unlike American values, Chinese values are strongly influenced by Confucius' thinking. Only when a person has reached a certain level of cultivation himself can he set an example so that the whole family can live in harmony. If the moral ethics of the family and the way to rule the family are further expanded and go, he can rule the country. To create a relatively fair society and help the people create a suitable environment for survival is to level the world. The values of "cultivating one's moral character, cultivating one's family, ruling one's country, and pacifying the world" have influenced China for thousands of years.

#### 4.2 Parent-child Activities

From the perspective of parent-child activities, parents in both works have achieved mutual understanding and communication with their children. However, due to the difference between the Chinese dream and the American

dream, its "family dream" is different.

#### 4.2.1 Similarity: Mutual Understanding and Communication

The importance of parents to their children can never be matched, and the parent-child activity sections in *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain* both demonstrate mutual understanding and communication.

*The Pursuit of Happiness* in Chris was a salesman before, for various reasons, career has not been doing particularly well, in the frequent setbacks, his wife chose to leave the family, and even left a son to Chris, in such a stressful environment, and busy work, and to take care of children, if I am Chris, will certainly choose to give up. But Chris did not, and the most touching thing in this movie is Chris treating his son with that attitude. Chris's son saw his father's life so embarrassed were wet eyes, but Chris did not give up his life, did not give up their children, so that the son was greatly touched, and because of the usual influence of Chris on his son, but also become the best education he gave his children.

In the *Growing Pain*, a new type of contemporary parent-child relationship is revealed by showing the life and study status of high school students, that is, the "friend-like" relationship mode. We all know that in traditional Chinese family education, the status of parents is supreme, and the concept of superiority and inferiority is deeply imprinted in the minds of elders and juniors. However, as people's perceptions change, parent-child relationships tend to be more friend-like, with more mutual understanding and communication, while retaining mutual respect.

#### 4.2.2 Difference: Different Family Dream

The American Dream is the pursuit of affluence, freedom and equal opportunities. Inspired and driven by it, people pursuing the American Dream always believe that in this land of America, no matter what color or ethnicity, no matter how poor and obscure, anyone enjoys equal opportunities for development can eventually reach the shore of success through their own diligent and hardworking efforts. The American Dream is a macroscopic

idea, which, from a microscopic view, reflects the family dream. In *The Pursuit of Happiness*, Chris believes that he must make a happy life for himself and his son. Once his goal is established, he does not care about anything, does not miss any opportunity to sell and express himself, gives his all for his dream, his attitude is not humble, does not curse, does not relent and does not give up.

The Chinese dream is a rich and strong country, a revitalized nation and happy people. The realization of the Chinese dream cannot be achieved without the support of millions of family dreams. In *Growing Pain*, one of the most prominent family dreams is for their children to desperately get into a good university. After the college entrance exam, the teenagers go their own way, full of sadness and expectations for the future. The four families go through ups and downs, find their own direction, and reap the benefits of moving growth.

#### 4.3 Difficulty Solving

From the perspective of difficulty solving, the protagonist in any work is positive and optimistic when facing difficulties. However, because China and the United States have different historical and cultural backgrounds, they also have different values for dealing with difficulties.

##### 4.3.1 Similarity: Optimism In the Face of Difficulties

In *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain*, when faced with difficulties, an obvious common denominator is that each person actively faces them, reflecting the positive guidance and unfailing care of adults for children.

The most important core of *The Pursuit of Happiness* is Chris's selfless fatherly love for his son, Kristoff. As Chris has experienced a lot of difficulties and conflicts, he understands the importance of this kind of fatherly love. In the most difficult days, he communicates well with his son and cultivates his son's optimism, reflecting the selflessness and greatness of fatherly love. When life was difficult, his wife felt worried and lost confidence, but Chris was more optimistic and believed he would get through the difficulties in front of him, while he also encouraged his wife. At the same time, his son's encouragement and trust in him also

become a great motivation for him to overcome difficulties. The kind of father-son love of sharing difficulties, supporting each other and taking care of each other is perfectly and movingly interpreted in the movie.

In *Growing Pain*, senior year is approaching, Lin Miaomiao experienced the shock of her parents' relationship, Qian Sanyi endured her parents' seeming separation, Jiang Tianhao was suddenly hit by family bankruptcy, and Deng Xiaoqi fell into the bottom because her mother's secret was exposed. All four families faced different difficulties, but they did not sink. Otherwise, they faced them actively and optimistically. Lin Miaomiao eventually experienced the love of her parents and decided to be angry with her past generation two paragraphs. Qian Sanyi and his mother communicate sincerely, and his mother finds his happiness. Jiang Tianhao's business venture took off and he started to pay attention to his studies. Deng Xiaoqi decides to take the art examination and fight to the end in blood, at any cost. This TV series ends in a comedy.

#### 4.3.2 Difference: Different Values in Dealing with Difficulties

China and the United States are two large countries with very different cultural and historical backgrounds, which need to understand and communicate with each other. By enjoying classic American movies, students can gain an understanding of American history, society, economy, politics, education, art, religion and other aspects, so as to optimize their knowledge structures, enhance their cultural awareness, improve their sensitivity to cultural differences, tolerance and flexibility in dealing with cultural differences, and develop their cross-cultural communication skills (language skills, language skills, cognitive skills and emotional skills).

There are profound differences in the values of Chinese and American people when facing difficulties, such as the understanding of individualism. The Chinese dictionary defines "individualism" as the idea that everything is based on personal interests, which is expressed in the form of self-interest, profit and deceit, etc.

Individualism in Chinese culture is synonymous with egoism and it is a derogatory term, while individualism in Western culture has a completely different connotation. Although individualism is the core of American cultural values, we should take a correct view of American individualistic values so that we can learn and absorb the essence of Western culture more rationally and better construct our own value system in the trend of the collision between Chinese and Western cultures.

## V. CONCLUSION

Family education is the starting point of moral development in life and is of great significance. To study the differences between Chinese and American family education and to analyze the reasons for the differences between family education in the two countries does not mean to reject all the achievements of family education in China, but to inherit dialectically the essence of traditional Chinese family education ideas, to learn from the successful experiences of American family education concepts, and to reject reasonably the negative factors in Chinese family education. In the process of developing and improving the theoretical system and practical activities of Chinese family education, we fully carry forward the excellent culture of the Chinese nation, absorb the advanced concepts of the United States, and discover the path of family education construction with Chinese characteristics. Through the comparison of the two works, the following conclusions are drawn from six aspects.

Three results have been concluded from aspects of narrative plots, devices and rhetoric.

(1) From the perspective of narrative plots, they are all telling the story of one or several families who have grown up through many difficulties and achieved success. But they focus on different characters, one tells the story of father and son, and the other tells the story of four families.

(2) From the perspective of narrative devices, their narrative techniques are very compact and coherent, one link after another. But their narratives are different in

person. *The Pursuit of Happiness* is mainly narrated in the first person and narration, while *Growing Pain* is narrated not only in the first person but also in the second and third person, but without narration.

(3) From the point of view of narrative rhetoric, they all cleverly violate the principle of cooperation and follow the principle of politeness. But their rhetorical focus is different, *The Pursuit of Happiness* highlights the rhetorical device of repetition and comparison, but *Growing Pain* highlights the rhetorical device of white drawing.

Three results have been concluded from aspects of philosophical comparison, parent-child activities and difficulty solving.

(4) From the perspective of philosophical comparison, they all tell the story of parents leading the next generation to pursue happiness and success, but the values of parents pursuing happiness and success in China and the United States are very different.

(5) From the perspective of parent-child activities, family education in China and the United States reflects the mutual communication and understanding between parents and children, but the "family dream" is different.

(6) From the perspective of difficulty solving, when facing difficulties, an obvious common point in the two dramas is that everyone actively faces it, reflecting the positive guidance and meticulous care of adults for children. But they have different values for difficulty.

Overall, this study explores the differences between Chinese and American family education through the comparison of two works, *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Growing Pain* and adds some new ideas to the updating of Chinese family education concepts. However, there are still many shortcomings in this study. Due to the limited personal conditions, the understanding of the current situation of family education in the United States is not comprehensive and specific, but mainly through literature reading and borrowing data and theories from others. It is believed that with the government's gradual attention to the construction of family education, the scientific research

field will explore the comparative issues of family education in China and the United States more deeply and thoroughly, and promote the sustainable, healthy, and harmonious development of family education in China.

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